

MOJAVE-SOUTHERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes Thursday, Sept. 6, 2001 Tonopah Field Station

Resource Advisory Council members present and category represented:

Agee, Marta	Ranching
Beck, Colleen	Archaeology
Helton, Jerry	Transportation and ROW
Hiatt, John	Wildlife
Ioli, Mark	Mining
Mellington, Steve	Public-at-Large
Mull, William	Ranching
Selby, Susan	Environment
Young, Billie Gayle	Wild Horses and Burros

Resource Advisory Council members absent:

Callihan, Barbara	Dispersed Recreation
Chicas, Patrick	Permitted Recreation
Frank-Churchill, Maurice	Native American
Smith, Stanley	Academic
Wickersham, Mike	State Agency

Bureau of Land Management representatives present:

Lara, Angie	Associate Field Manager, Las Vegas
Kolkman, Gene	Field Manager, Ely
Morse, Mark	Field Manager, Las Vegas

Public attendees:

Crabtree, Laurence	U.S. Forest Service, Tonopah District Ranger
Maichle, Robert	Environment

A copy of each attachment is listed in the text of, or at the end of these minutes, and also is on file with the official

copy of the minutes in the Las Vegas Field Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to view said attachments should contact Phillip Guerrero, Las Vegas Field Office, at (702) 647-5046.

Chairperson Susan Selby opened the meeting at precisely 8:05 a.m., noting the lack of a quorum.

Proposed Howard Hughes Land Exchange - Mark Morse, BLM Las Vegas.

- Update on a hoped-for plan to obtain legislative approval for the Red Rock Land Exchange, which involves the BLM and a team from Howard Hughes (refer to attachment A). Morse says a competitive sale would be the preferred disposal method. Morse explains that the Howard Hughes team may have reached an impasse in negotiations. Morse says the project has some distance to go before culmination, adding that it might have been resolved by Fall of 2001, had mining claims not become an issue.
- Hiatt questions Section 17, re the view shed on steep lands. Hiatt says he has proposed, in writing, a contour with an established boundary, but has so far met with a "less than enthusiastic" response from the Howard Hughes staff. Hiatt says he has met with Tom Worden, but remains unsure of the outcome.

Selby recessed the meeting for a break at 8:45 a.m. and reconvened the meeting at 9 a.m.

Proposed Wilderness designation in Lincoln, Nye and White Pine counties - Maria Ryan, Nevada Cooperative Extension.

- Ryan explains that the Tri-county representatives have agreed to work on wilderness legislation within the Ely District, visiting with Nevada's congressional delegation so as to obtain the legislation necessary. Ryan says the deadline for a legislative proposal is January 2003 with consensus building-style meetings tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2002. Ryan says the cooperative extension will develop and implement an education campaign aimed at the general public. Ryan says the BLM Ely District has agreed to provide the necessary resource documents, but is recommending that the total acreage be lowered by about 1.2 million acres to approximately 19.2 million acres.
- Agee requests that, at each meeting, federal and state agency representatives be identified so as to clarify what is government opinion versus private citizen opinion. Ryan agrees to take Agee's suggestion into consideration.
- Selby questions the project's overall cost. Ryan says that exact dollar figures are currently unknown. Selby asks what entities are represented on the "Tri-county." Kolkman responds that on the Tri-county Commission are commissioners from Lincoln, Nye and White Pine counties, plus representatives from the BLM Ely District and U.S. Forest Service. Selby notes that the Tri-county group would undoubtedly represent local stakeholders, but not necessarily all Nevada stakeholders, nor stakeholders outside of Nevada.
- Young asks why wild horse issues were omitted from some Hiatt-provided information, re Wilderness, Nevada's Hidden Treasure Worth Preserving, Wilderness on the Horizon, Nevada's Mojave Desert Region and Colorado River Country, and Las Vegas' Backyard Bonanza (refer to attachment B). Hiatt explains that wild horses are not a project issue. Kolkman says he understands that Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., will be able to support said legislation only if it were to garner bilateral Congressional support.

Livestock/grazing actions in Tonopah - Craig MacKinnon, Tonopah Field Station.

- Update on Tonopah Field Station's impounding of two rancher's cattle.
MacKinnon explains that the office began impounding cattle on Friday, July 26, after notifying the former permittees who in 1997 lost their leases for non-payment of fees. MacKinnon says the county sheriff was not supportive of the July action. A total of 233 cattle were impounded, says MacKinnon. A Reno magistrate is expected to rule on three impoundment-related items no later than Friday, Sept. 7; a temporary restraining order, state versus federal jurisdiction, and whether the issue can be resolved in a state versus federal court.
Agee asks why the state BLM office blamed "overgrazing" for the impoundment. MacKinnon says overgrazing was not an issue, though there were, in some cases, water concerns. The cattle

were impounded for failure through the administrative process to follow the law, says MacKinnon.

Hiatt asks what will happen to the afore-mentioned allotments. MacKinnon says the allotments are under evaluation. He says it is possible that temporary emergency non-renewable permits could be issued, though in the long term, the allotments might be used as grass banks. He says environmental assessments are tentatively scheduled.

Tonopah 300 Race - Bill Fisher, Tonopah Field Station

- Distributing a hand-out entitled "FY 2001, Tonopah '300' Best in the Desert OHV Event Costs(refer to attachment C)," Fisher explains that the July 2001 race cost the BLM approximately \$5,182.60. Fisher says that 159 people applied to race. He says that 148 actually participated. Fisher says that the next race, scheduled in July 2002, will be the last to require route changes. Post 2002 events will utilize previously used routes, says Fisher.

Selby recessed the meeting for a break at 10:15 a.m. and reconvened the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

District Updates:

Battle Mountain Field Office, Tonopah Field Station - Craig MacKinnon (refer to attachment D).

- The field office is working with the Ely field office on a 1,000 mile event, scheduled in 2002.
- The field office is working with NDOW on a central Nevada Elk Plan.
- The field office has filed a final assessment on the Fellini allotment currently under appeal.
- Nye County government has proposed a Recreation Public Purpose (R&PP) lease on 92 acres surrounding the community of Beatty so as to protect the Amargosa Toad.
- Update on Yomba Shoshone Tribe grazing issue.
- MacKinnon will depart soon for new position in Oregon.

Ely Field Office - Gene Kolkman (refer to attachment E).

- Progress report on fiber optic line installation in Ely district.
- Update on energy applications in White Pine County, i.e., Duke and PG&E. Note: Water experts have determined that Steptoe Valley lacks enough water to supply two power plants.
- Progress report on the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project.
- Progress report on the Ely and Mount Wilson Guest Ranch Community Urban Interface projects.

Las Vegas Field Office - Mark Morse

- Update on energy projects i.e., Apex, Duke, Mirant, Moapa Calpine Project, PG&E and Reliant.
- Citing safety concerns, the Las Vegas field office has closed 22 abandoned mine sites in the Jean area.
- Update on Virgin River management issues.
- The Las Vegas field office is attempting to form partnerships and educate the public about district-wide illegal dumping and littering issues.
- The Las Vegas field office is beginning to receive air quality violations, due partly to illegal urban recreational activity. The office hopes to put said land parcels up for sale.
- The Las Vegas field office has received funding for plant reduction, restoration and seed banking.
- Update on Lake Las Vegas land exchange.
- Nellis Air Force Base has proposed a land exchange to acquire property along the base runway's north end.
- Brief explanation of plans to enhance public service through federal inter-agency cooperation.

Meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12:07 p.m and reconvened at 1:03 p.m.

Public Comment Period:

- Nevada Land Users Coalition, Clint Bentley re Position on Clark County Public Lands Bill Wilderness

- Proposal (on the agenda, but not in attendance).
- Lee Ziegler, member of the Motorcycle Racing Association of Nevada (MORAN).
Attending to provide RAC members opportunity for question and answer period. Maichle notes value of positive OHV land use. Kolkman notes developing issues of new OHV trails and need for positive OHV user input.

Forest Service issues - Laurence Crabtree

- A brief description/update on three projects: a grazing allotment in the Reese River Valley, an Elk Herd Management-type plan and Prescribed Fire plan.
 - ▶ Reese River Valley grazing allotment.
A decision to allow grazing has not been made. A permittee will be chosen once a decision is reached. Informal consultations have been held with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office re specific species of wildlife. The question is raised as to whether the U.S. Forest Service would, in the event of wildfire elsewhere, allow limited temporary grazing on the allotments.
 - ▶ Elk Herd Management-type plan.
A small Elk herd on Table Mountain has reached the cap, or maximum number allowable for the area. A 13-member steering committee is studying the impact that wildlife and livestock grazing combined is having on the area's vegetative resource. The committee is scheduled to meet again this October in Fallon, Nev.
 - ▶ Prescribed Fire plan.
A prescribed burn allowing for the study of wildfire's impacts on habitat and wildlife has been expanded in scope and size.

Non-agendaed item - Maria Ryan special request

- Ryan is conducting a 4-5 page Needs Assessment. She asks to be allowed to send a survey to RAC members so as to determine what study areas need to be most addressed. Ryan receives a positive response from all attending.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act: Round II Expenditures Decision Document - Mark Morse
(refer to attachment F).

Clark County Public Lands Bill, Wilderness Designation - Mark Morse

- Currently cleaning up boundaries of Wilderness Study Areas with meetings scheduled tentatively in October 2001. Passage of Congressional legislation is expected in Spring of 2002. Potential WSA boundary issues could include a proposed gunnery range northwest of Las Vegas and a transmission line corridor between Lake Mead and Las Vegas.
- Also in the proposed legislation is the Jean-Primm Corridor Study Area, site of the Ivanpah Airport on Interstate 15 between Jean and Primm, Nev. Morse would like to see airport and/or county government assume responsibility for acreage located between the community of Jean and the airport runway, designating the property to be a County Managed Area, or CMA. A land sale is scheduled in March or May 2002, provided an Environmental Impact Statement proves the project feasible.
- Henderson State College is looking to obtain from the BLM about 500 acres of public lands.
- The Southern Nevada Water Authority is looking at a possible water line to Primm, Nev. Also under consideration is a transportation corridor and Mag-Lev train operating from Primm to Las Vegas.

There being no further items for discussion, Selby adjourned the meeting at 4 p.m.

APPROVED BY:

Date

Susan Selby, Chair
Mojave-Southern Great Basin
Resource Advisory Council

Minutes provided by Chris Hanefeld, Public Affairs Specialist, BLM Ely District

Attachments:

- A - Map of proposed Red Rock Land Exchange
- B - Wilderness Act of 1964; Key Points about the 1964 Wilderness Act; House Report No. 101-405; Wilderness, Nevada's Hidden Treasure Worth Preserving; Wilderness on the Horizon; Nevada's Mojave Desert Region; and Colorado River Country, Las Vegas' Backyard Bonanza
- C - FY 2001, Tonopah "300" Best in the Desert OHV Event Costs
- D - Battle Mountain Field Office report
- E - Ely Field Office report
- F - Decision Document, Expenditure of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Special Account